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# Editorial: Legislators value informed citizenry

**Kokomo Tribune Editorial Board**

April 22, the state's legislative session ended a week early. To commemorate this milestone, Stephen Key, executive director and general counsel of the Hoosier State Press Association, sent a series of letters to local legislators June 30. The correspondences — sent to State Sen. Jim Buck, R-Kokomo; State Rep. Tony Cook, R-Cicero; State Rep. Heath VanNatter, R-Kokomo; and State Rep. Mike Karickhoff, R-Kokomo — thanked these state lawmakers for their various contributions to working toward an informed citizenry this session:

**Senate Bill 285**

S.B. 285, authored by State Sen. Jim Tomes, R-Wadesville, would have directed law enforcement to use any means necessary to clear roadways of unauthorized protesters. After diffusing a volatile atmosphere, Buck worked with Sen. Tomes, and the bill was changed to request a summer study committee on the issue before it was approved by the Senate, 34-16.

**House Bill 1523**

As we have written before, H.B. 1523 would have created a search fee for voluminous records requests. (That includes those that took more than two hours to find the records.) HSPA worked with Speaker of the House Brian Bosma, R-Indianapolis, to pass language that would guarantee the public's ability to obtain public records via email with no copying fee. Gov. Eric Holcomb vetoed the bill due to the search fee. As chair of the Senate Local Government Committee, Buck supported the bill and gave it a hearing. Cook, VanNatter and Karickhoff also supported it.

**House Bill 1130**

As we've also written before, H.B. 1130 would have been a chance for Indiana to join the 12 other states that carry protections for student journalists had it passed. But, the bill died on the Senate floor when the state Department of Education joined the opposition on the last day for passage of House bills out of the Senate. Nevertheless, Cook, VanNatter and Karickhoff did what they could to support it.

**House Bill 1248**

Though Karickhoff authored H.B. 1248, which would have exempted administrative function meetings by county commissioners from the Open Door Law, HSPA thanked him for listening to its opposition. "We agree there needs to be a definition for 'administrative functions,' and look forward to working with you this summer of possible language. With that

pledge, you agreed not to push for a committee hearing. The bill died for lack of a hearing in the House Government and Regulatory Reform Committee, chaired by State Rep. Kevin Mahan, R-Hartford City," wrote Key.

As we look forward to the 2018 legislative session, we hope we can count on our representatives in the Statehouse to continue to look out for the best interests of the citizens they represent.